

IN THE CLAIMS

1-7 (canceled)

8. (new) A photo printing system for transmitting image information including photo frame image data to a plurality of printers through signal paths to print images, comprising:

a memory for loading image information transmitted from an image input device;

a print order managing unit for managing said image information on an order-by-order basis;

an input command processing unit for creating print setting information including the number of prints from commands inputted through a command input device;

a printer control unit for checking an operating status of each of said printers;

a distributing unit for applying, based on the operating status, printer IDs identifying the printers used and acting as distributing setting information in the form of attribute data, to the image information in the respective orders, and further applying the print setting information transmitted from said input command processing unit, in the form of attribute data, to the image information in the respective orders; and

a data output unit for transmitting, based on a signal from said printer control unit, photo frame image data in the image information to be printed from said memory to one of said printers specified by the distributing setting information included in the attribute data of the image information, and causing said one of said printers to effect printing according to the number of prints specified by the print setting information.

9. (new) A photo printing system as defined in claim 8, wherein said print setting information includes a printing priority.

10. (new) A photo printing system as defined in claim 8, wherein said distributing unit applies, as said distributing setting information, at least one printer ID of a printer currently in idle state or a printer with the least operating load currently.

11. (new) A photo printing system as defined in claim 8, wherein said distributing unit applies said attribute data to the respective photo frame image data.

12. (new) A photo printing system as defined in claim 11, wherein said distributing unit applies different printer IDs to the photo frame image data belonging to the image file of the same print order.

13. (new) A photo printing method for transmitting image information including photo frame image data to a plurality of printers through signal paths to print images, comprising the steps of:

loading a memory with image information transmitted from an image input device, and managing said image information on an order-by-order basis;

creating print setting information including the number of prints from commands inputted through a command input device;

checking an operating status of each of said printers;

applying, based on the operating status, printer IDs identifying the printers used and acting as distributing setting information in the form of attribute data, to the image information in the respective orders, and further applying the print setting information in the form of attribute data to the image information in the respective orders; and

based on a signal from a printer control unit, transmitting photo frame image data in the image information to be printed from said memory to one of said printers specified by the distributing setting information included in the attribute data of the image information, and causing said one of said printers to effect printing according to the number of prints specified by the print setting information.

14. (new) A photo printing method as defined in claim 13, wherein said print setting information includes a printing priority.

15. (new) A photo printing method as defined in claim 13, wherein at least one printer ID of a printer currently in idle state or a printer with the least operating load currently is applied as said distributing setting information.

16. (new) A photo printing method as defined in claim 13, wherein said attribute data is applied to the respective photo frame image data.

17. (new) A photo printing method as defined in claim 16, wherein different printer IDs are applied to the photo frame image data belonging to the image file of the same print order.